



Preserving Our Past

The Future of the Past committee held its fifth and final meeting in Helena on November 15. The group has been meeting since January to develop a unified voice that presents to the legislature a plan on how to fund the long-term preservation of the state's historical and cultural treasures. The 14-member committee was composed of six legislators and two members each from the Montana Historical Society Board of Trustees, the Montana Heritage Commission, the Tourism Advisory Council and the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commission.

The committee has recommended that four bills be introduced in the legislature. One of the bills will set up the cultural grant program while the other three bills will focus on how to fund this grant program. The funding mechanisms considered in the bills include:

- A 1% bed tax increase from 4% to 5%. Montana residents who pay bed tax would be eligible for a bed tax rebate when filing income taxes.
- A tax on car rentals.
- A cultural trust within our coal trust. The interest from this cultural trust would fund the grant program.

Details of these bills and other legislative news will follow in future issues of *Updates* and on our Intranet site at www.travelmontana.state.mt.us.

Webdate

Travel Montana's web team is embarking on a new web content-sharing relationship with Montana Historical Society Press and *Montana the Magazine of Western History*. The Historical Society will provide excerpts from their books and magazines, and Travel Montana will post the content. A link on how users may purchase these books or magazines from the Historical Society will be provided. According to Travel Montana's Electronic Marketing Manager Corrie Hahn, this partnership is a value-added feature for our web users. "There are a lot of western history buffs out there, especially the international visitor who wants this type of information. We are committed to providing this type of valuable content for our visitors." A link to this feature can be found on our visitmt.com homepage. Travel Montana has had a similar arrangement with Falcon Press since last summer.

In response to requests from our users, the web team has created a new snow report archives feature on www.wintermt.com. This special feature allows visitors to go back in time and see what the conditions were a day or week ago at the state's 16 ski areas. The crew is also developing a new feature that focuses on the Race to the Sky Dog Sled Race, with special links for kids. It will be completed by January 2001.

Traffic on Travel Montana's main homepage, visitmt.com, has seen about 1.3 million

visitor sessions from January 1 through October 31, 2000. This is compared to the same time period in 1999 with 734,374 visitors and 430,665 in 1998. [Visitmt.com](http://visitmt.com) anticipates hosting more than 1.5 million visitors in 2000. This would be a 78% increase from 1999.

Lewis and Clark Workshops Planned

Travel Montana, the Montana Stockgrowers Association (MSGA), the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commission, Montana State University Extension, Small Business Development Centers and the Montana Agriculture Department have teamed up to present three Lewis and Clark-related workshops February 19-21, 2001. A full-day workshop will be held on February 19 at Wolf Point's Sherman Motor Inn, February 20 at Fort Benton's Ag Museum and February 21 at Western Montana College in Dillon.

The workshop is entitled "The Corps of Rural Discovery: Lewis & Clark Visitors Among Montana's Ag Community." The purpose of the workshop is to highlight the potential opportunities the upcoming bicentennial observance can provide to Montana farmers and ranchers living along the historic trail. The expected increased visitation along the trail provides opportunities for:

- Education - telling agriculture's story to primarily urban visitors.
- Economic activity - how a recreation business might benefit an agricultural operation.
- Networking - community/country relationship building and cultural exchange.

The workshop agenda includes presentations on the Montana Stockgrowers Association's "Undaunted Stewardship" program, Montana's Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Observance plans, and farm

Did You Know

- Off the Beaten Path in Bozeman was named by *Travel & Leisure* magazine as the 13th best tour operator in the world.
- Custer's Last Stand Reenactment was named as one of North America's 100 Best Events in 2001 by the American Bus Association.
- The Big Mountain will host the Chevy Truck U.S. Alpine Championships, March 23-28, 2001.
- Mountain Meadows Guest Ranch, River Rock Lodge and Rainbow Ranch Lodge were featured in the December/January issue of *Travel Holiday* magazine.

and ranch recreation business opportunities.

Registration is \$30 per person prior to February 9 and \$40 after that date. For more information or a registration brochure contact Travel Montana at 406-444-4366, or the Montana Stockgrowers Association at 406-442-3450.

Write On

PUBLICITY OFFICE NEWS

Travel Montana Publicity Coordinator Mary Boyle and Executive Director of the Flathead CVB Carol Edgar joined 200 U.S. and Canadian-based travel writers, photographers and editors at the Society of American Travel Writer's Annual Conference in Cardiff, Wales, in October. Mary and Carol had the opportunity to personally speak with many of these established professionals on why Montana is a desirable travel destination. The writers were interested in Montana's soft adventure activities, snow skiing, national parks, historical treasures and Native American tourism. It is interesting to note that neither Mary nor Carol were questioned about Montana's fires.

So Long, Farewell

With much sadness Travel Montana bids goodbye to Film Office Manager Lonie Stimac. Lonie has been a part of the film office team for 11 1/2 years, 10 of those years as the manager of the program. Under Lonie's leadership, the Big Sky has been featured in such films as *A River Runs Through It*, *Far and Away*, *The*



River Wild, *What Dreams May Come* and *The Horse Whisperer*. She has also worked to establish Montana as the backdrop for countless commercial projects. Lonie's energy, take-charge attitude and commitment to her staff and Travel Montana will be missed. Lonie will now use her talents as the managing director for the Association of Film Commissioners International as well as spend more time volunteering for the Red Cross. Break a leg in your future endeavors. However, the show must go on, and Film Office Location Coordinator Sten Iversen will serve as the acting director until a permanent replacement is found.

Montana: A Big Hit in Salt Lake City

The National Tour Association (NTA) held its annual conference November 10-15 in Salt Lake City. Group and Overseas Marketing Manager Pam Gosink and Group Travel Specialist Marlee Iversen met with more than 70 tour operators to tout the virtues of the "Last Best Place." In addition, more than 30 Montana tourism service suppliers and the Travel Montana staff hosted 70 plus tour operators at a successful "Montana Night" dinner/education event at Salt Lake City's Log Haven Restaurant. For those interested in NTA sales leads contact Pam or Marlee at 406-444-2654, pam@visitmt.com or marlee@visitmt.com, or you can find them on Travel Montana's Intranet site at www.travelmontana.state.mt.us in the programs section under group travel.

Marketing Plan

Travel Montana's 2000-2001 marketing plan is now available. This year's publication has a new look and revised layout including the addition of photographs. The publication highlights each department's accomplishments and goals. For a copy of the marketing plan call Rose Bond at 406-444-2654. The document is also available in PDF format on Travel Montana's Intranet site at www.travelmontana.state.mt.us.

2001 Governor's Conference - It's Coming!

Planning for the 2001 Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation is underway. The annual tourism industry gathering will take place March 26-27, 2001, at the Best Western Cavanaugh's Colonial Hotel in Helena. Hope to see you all there.

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.

Calendar of Events

December

- 5 MTRI Working Group Meeting, FWP, Helena

January

- 1 Happy New Year from Travel Montana
3 57th Montana Legislature convenes in Helena
5-8 "Cross-Country Ski" and "Snowmobile" media tours, West Yellowstone
10-14 "Ski Big Mountain" media tour, Whitefish

For all of the latest Montana tourism industry information log on to Travel Montana's Intranet site:
travelmontana.state.mt.us



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